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The Trans/National Study of Culture
and The Institutions of Human Speciation

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The Institutions of Human Speciation

The teleology of post-Enlightenment thought—here it matters little whether we call it humanism or the human sciences—can be understood in its archaeological totality as a massive and highly varied effort to comprehend in a scientific way the staggering diversity of anthropological difference. The roots of this project lie in the early modern sciences of biology, philology, and political economy. Its goal is to create an exhaustive taxonomy that would at once be the ultimate compendium of the various types, models, and images of human individuals, communities, and their species, and an explanatory model for their respective internal differences. Needless to say, the discovery of such an 'anthropological matrix' would have profound implications not just for knowledge, but also and especially for the organization and governance of human individuals and the societies in which they live in real time. Knowledge about anthropological difference can never be, for this reason, 'disinterested'; it is always already implicated in the technologies of population management.

The default question for cultural study in the mode of speciation is, "what kind of model for human being does one find in culture X?" This mode of questioning is essentially indebted to the discipline of modern philology and the objects it creates. As Foucault observed in *The Order of Things* (Foucault 2002), the modern understanding of language in a philological mode finds that it is rooted not in things but in the subject that apprehends and does things to objects. Language is thus a manifestation not of a representative order that governs the relations between things, but of the *will* of a certain people. Yet this will, as Foucault underlines, is not of the order of conscious volition; it is something that can only be in fact brought to awareness by the representational practices of a subject.

Under the regime of the philological notion of collective (yet unconscious) volition,

representation is incorporated into the model of linguistic communication at the point of pronominal invocation. The assumption that you and I are capable of communicating exactly what we mean in a way that is understandable to us both, without risk of failure or need for repetition can be accomplished only through a moment of representation that confuses 'we' as a case of the vocative designation with a specific group of people for whom repetition of the original enunciation is thought to be unnecessary. When repetition is required, it is called 'translation'; where failure is present, it is attributed to exteriority. Today, the historicity of these assumptions is becoming ever clearer: in fact, repetition and failure are integral parts of every linguistic encounter. Needless to say, the fact that human beings are disposed to share signs does not guarantee successful communication anymore than sharing itself produces or requires homogeneous community; neither can such sharing be reduced or equated to the notion of an individuated collective intentionality. Yet this is precisely what forms the basic presupposition for the modern thought of community, crystallized in the nation-state. What had been a philological presupposition has thus established what must be considered one of the founding obfuscations of modern thought: the presumed equivalence between a people and a language. Giorgio Agamben writes:

> Romantic ideology—which consciously created this connection, thereby influencing extensively modern linguistic theory as well as the political theory that is still dominant nowadays—tried to clarify something that was already obscure (the concept of people) with the help of something even more obscure (the concept of language). Thanks to the symbiotic correspondence thus instituted, two contingent and indefinite cultural entities transform themselves into almost natural organisms endowed with their own necessary laws and characteristics. (Agamben 2000, 66)

What is the "transformation" described by Agamben that turns the "contingent and indefinite" into "organisms" that are "almost natural", yet governed by "necessary laws" and endowed with "characteristics"? For Foucault, it is not simply the case that objectification can define the "turn" of the modern. The specificity of the human lies in the peculiar fact that, unlike any other species, human beings participate in their own speciation through the acts of speaking, working, and reproduction. Foucault's later work on biopolitics, which he famously describes as the "entry of life into history", suggests that the "transformation" of which Agamben speaks must be sought in the institutional loci that attempt to regulate language, labor and life through normalization.

The ironic punchline of Darwin's *Origin of Species*—that there is neither origin nor species—was lost upon the normalizing institutions created, contingently, out of colonial encounter to codify "contingent and indefinite" anthropological difference. Two forms are salient: 1) the disciplinary divisions of the human sciences, which maintain an anthropological distribution of bodies, tongues, and minds inherited from the colonial/imperial modernity; and 2) the organization of human populations according to the spatial and epistemological logic of sovereignty, to the exclusion of practico-temporal forms of relationship. In their universality, these are the institutional forms dedicated not to this or that concrete identity or definite knowledge, but simply to the principle of the speciation of the human—the transposition of the biological notion of species difference into the domain of human social ontology. Let us henceforth refer to them as *the institutions of speciation*.

To approach the problem of the trans/national study of culture without addressing the way in which knowledge, as it is embedded in various social practices of language, labor, and life, is intrinsically part of the speciation of the human is to continue to blindly defer to the defining search of colonial/imperial modernity for the ultimate technology of human population engineering. To my ears, an ethical response to the call for a reflection on the trans/national study of culture begins with the liberation from the institutions of human speciation as its goal.

Asymmetry

The continuing institutional legacy of the Enlightenment search for a general theory of species difference requires that we understand the prefix "trans-" in a way that would include not just the border(s) between and within different nations—which are undergoing a complex process of multiplication and micro-dispersion (Neilson and Mezzadra, 2008), but also and especially the line that divides the former imperial nations from the former colonial ones. On top of this task, one must be mindful not to instantiate normativity with regard to borders in general; especially, we should be on guard against understanding the social organization of human multiplicities through any number of specific, historically-determined forms such as the tribe, the empire, and/or the nation-state. In the modern period, national borders are the focus of attention: they exhibit a high degree of consistency and must be considered institutions in their own right. Yet behind the visible border of the nation-state lies a border of another kind. Both Schmitt (2003) and Anghie (2004) have shown in different ways the extent to which the formation of the contemporary global system of sovereign nation-states was fundamentally indebted to a division that distinguished juridically and culturally between Europe and its

exterior—to be precise, we should urge ourselves to remember that this act of demarcation participated actively in the creation of a form of social organization that had not exactly existed before—Europe. Hence, in order to address the problem of a trans/national study of culture, it is necessary to consider not just the negotiation of national borders within the nation and outside it, but also the line that separates the former colonial nations from the imperial ones.

In *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West*, a recent book that typifies the impasse in recent thinking about cultural matters, Christopher Caldwell observes an "asymmetry of knowledge" (Caldwell 2010, 272) between the West and the non-West. Lamentably, the author's considerable cultural erudition is framed within the conventional objects taken up by national security studies (territory, infrastructure, and state-based identity) and completely elides the profound form of epistemological asymmetry established by the colonial encounter preceding the formation of nation-states outside of Europe that Edward Said famously called "Orientalism". The historical narrative deployed by Caldwell also does not consider the serious asymmetries that exist in other domains, such as capital accumulation, military force, logistics, global institutions, museum collections, etc. The only sense of temporality that infuses the work is the presupposition of cultural continuity that the author glibly mobilizes to distinguish a population of immigrants from European "natives"—a vague term that not only explicitly excludes non-whites born or naturalized in Europe, but also inadvertently effaces thousands of years of linguistic variation, migration and cultural history 'in' Europe long before it was ever 'Europe', as well the much shorter yet equally significant timeline charting the elimination of various cultural and linguistic minorities during the process of homogenization undertaken in the construction of modern European nation-states. One does not, however, have to subscribe to Caldwell's ahistorical insecurity to agree that recognition of profound asymmetries are the entry point for the trans/national study of culture across the colonial/imperial line today. In the socio-economic realm, there are the asymmetries of the international division of labor, labor migration, and control over capital flows; in the epistemological realm, there are the asymmetries of the disciplinary divisions at the heart of humanistic knowledge; in the historical realm, there are the asymmetries of colonial relations; in the political realm, there are the asymmetries of representation and force; and finally, among this catalogue of asymmetries, there is the asymmetry between the equivalence among nation-states on either side of the colonial/imperial divide and the social discontinuities and repressed differences within each.

That the extent and meaning of the various asymmetries inherited from the past are understood differently on either side of the colonial/imperial divide complicates the task of assessing their extent and meaning. After all, that is what asymmetry really means: relations are asymmetrical precisely when it becomes impossible for both sides to agree on the standards of measure. The institutional legacy of methodological positivism provides one such example. Although it was associated from the start with the governmental technologies such as statistics necessary to the formation of the homogenizing nation-state and its project of imperial expansion, a tortuous series of political displacements have created a contemporary situation in which many intellectuals from outside the West are likely to identify positivism as one of the methodologies most likely to be of use in the combat against the hegemony of ostensibly universalistic forms, amalgamated under the rubric of 'theory', behind which hide Western particularism. Yet to treat the matter as if it were simply a question of comparative national or civilizational history would merely signal the recuperation of the apparatus of capture between experience and knowledge (about which we shall have more to say below) upon which the entire edifice of modern speciation is built.

False Symmetry

It is often supposed that the present state of global affairs, characterized by the autonomy of independent, sovereign nation-states, represents a return to normalcy after a period, lasting several centuries, of anormality typically represented by the various forms of possession, extraterritoriality, protectorates, mandates, and so on and so forth, that characterized the colonial period. It is as if the contemporary postcolonial world system represents an historical reversal of *translatio imperii* (the hypothetical transfer of native sovereignty to European imperial powers). With the supposed restoration of native sovereignty (from which aboriginal populations are conspicuously absent), the political map of the world has now been drawn to correspond with the cultural reality; the peoples of the world have finally reestablished the continuity of self-governance that roughly corresponds to the continuity of culture. It is precisely this sort of reasoning that authorizes Caldwell to agree with authors who see Middle Eastern migration to Europe in terms of a "project to claim territory" (Caldwell 2010, 108). The reference in the same context to "ethnic colonies" in Europe (Caldwell 2010, 109) only heightens the glaring absence of the colonial encounter in general. Such repression of historical memory is behind the assumption that the current, postcolonial/postimperial situation represents a return to normalcy in the cultural sphere, interrupted only by the unpleasant dilemmas of 'exceptional' populations such as migrants. The notion of

cultural continuity is mobilized to create a formal symmetry, codified in the global system of state sovereignty, that obviates the need for a holistic and historical analytic of underlying asymmetries.

It is in this regard that I take Caldwell's work to be a sign of the deep cynicism and pessimistic insecurity that has become essential to the continuing existence at this historical moment of the institutions of speciation. Caldwell's exclusion of migrants from the category of the native Europeans is not only ahistorical, buying into what Gayatri Spivak has criticized as the "self-contained version of the West" (Spivak 1988, 291), it is also a strong form of the strategy of false symmetry that enables the institutions of speciation to claim renewed legitimacy. We can say the symmetry is false to the extent that Caldwell never links the problem of migration to the historical construction of a capitalist world system based on state sovereignty that emerged out of the colonial/imperial modernity and its contemporary legacy. Hence, the actually existing asymmetries are found not just through an analytic of political economy, but also through an analytic of the distribution of tongues and minds in the assemblage of social bodies. A 'resolution' that is decisively different from a 'final solution' of the migrant problem (which presents a 'crisis' around which can be mobilized the institutions of speciation) can only be contemplated in tandem with a resolution to the massive asymmetries that define to this day the global system of speciation. Caldwell's rhetorical strategy amounts to a deeply cynical refusal of the resources for hope—for 'migrants' and 'natives' alike.

Study

Knowledge constitutes a fundamental part of human existence. One helpful way to understand the role of knowledge in relation to human beings comes from the concept of *neoteny* that has gradually gained acceptance among contemporary biologists. According to this view, the human animal is characterized by a lack of instincts that would correspond to a specific ecological niche—a set of knowledge and practices that correspond to a specific environmental milieu. As a neotenous animal, human beings enjoy the capability of adapting to virtually any environmental milieu (within the constraints of their biological needs), yet at the price of being born without environment-specific innate knowledge and the inability to reach a point of complete maturation. The lesson I draw from the neotenous condition is that the human being requires constant learning as a fundamental condition for existence. Nobel-prize physicist Isabelle Stengers has gone one step further by pointing out that teaching, or sharing one's knowledge, is another fundamental prerequisite to the right to learn, and should be considered as much of an ethical obligation and a right

as learning (Stengers 2005).

The right and obligation to partake in the social sharing of knowledge has, of course, potentially revolutionary implications for modern societies, which entertain a fundamentally different relation to knowledge than those that have come before. It is not by accident that the division of labor based on intellectual difference has been a constant object of critical thought ever since the modern state (which as Jacques Bidet reminds us is always a *state of class*) assumed an active role in the promotion, recognition and accreditation of scientific knowledge. Ivan Illich's now-classic critique of the educational institutions of the capitalist nation-state, *Deschooling Society* (Illich 1971), offers a useful point of reference to think through the relation between the division of labor and the speciation of the human. The point to which I would like to draw attention is not the critique of state centralization and capitalist commodification so much as Illich's assertion that the logic of grades and grading is a form of social segmentation whose effects go well beyond the division of labor to encompass the speciation of the human in general. "Obligatory schooling inevitably polarizes a society; it also grades the nations of the world according to an international caste system." (Illich 1971, 6). While the polarization of a society refers to the classic division of labor, Illich's reference to an "international caste system" cannot simply be limited to the international aspects of that division. "School," Illich writes later, "initiates young people into a world where everything can be measured" (Illich 1971, 20). To what extent is the 'measure of everything', including human beings, linked to what Robert Jay Gould refers to as "the mismeasure of man"? Illich's answer would be that the dialectic of measured mismeasurement in schools has more to do with the economy of political power than the chance for real learning and cooperative social relations.

We are still far, however, from using our critical awareness of the way in which asymmetries inherited from the former colonial/imperial divide play out in the pedagogical situation to create alternative institutions to those of speciation. For this reason, let us consider a bit more in detail the way in which the mode of speciation is inscribed in the pedagogical encounter.

The Deficit of Experience

Pedagogical necessity, particularly in relation to linguistico-cultural training, is probably the most common means by which the institutions of speciation attempt to invest the individual articulation between bodies, tongues, and minds. It is assumed as a matter of principle that the student of a foreign culture begins his study with a

deficit of experience—symbolized by the inability to speak a foreign language—that native students do not possess. To overcome this experiential deficit, the student must proceed in a methodical manner by specific, graded stages that enable one to know the object, a process which, if pursued to its end, leads to certification of expertise allowing one to participate in the production and dissemination of socially authoritative representations of a given culture. Of course, all manner of different methodologies and stages of instruction are possible, but what remains constant is the disciplinary structure defined by the deficit of experience. Hence, in a course of instruction about 'China' in the institutions of speciation outside China, one expects to deal with objects that are 'Chinese'; anything else is ancillary at best, illegitimate at worst. Although it may be that the notion of discontinuity is tolerated or perhaps even partially highlighted at the advanced levels of a discipline—the place where a 'deconstruction' of the cultural object is selectively accessible to the *cognoscenti*, it is still commonly thought that the intermediate and especially beginner's levels require a patient engagement with the elements central to the constitution of continuity—origins and influences—without which a culture supposedly cannot be understood as such.

It is assumed that the beginner lacks experience, for which knowledge delivered in graded fashion is the remedy. One should not neglect to notice, however, that this remedy-via-graded-knowledge to the 'experiential deficit' necessarily admits the validity of the opposing proposition: even in the case of an abundance, rather than a dearth, of experience, knowledge is still required to perform a mediating role. Both 'experts' and members of a certain culture alike must be able to explain why certain types of experience are 'shared' among the members of a community, and not others. Regardless of one's level of experience 'in' a culture, knowledge must be mobilized time and time again to mediate the representation of a collective.

And no matter how professionally advanced the student in a 'foreign' institution of speciation may be, she still always has to confront the relative deficit or surplus of experience in relation to the social field. It is exactly at this point of interface between the institutions of speciation in different states and the relative accumulation of experience distributed among bodies, tongues, and minds that the postimperial student of a culture, filled either with good intentions and modesty or, more rarely, horror and disgust, often takes the decisive step back from liberation from the institutions of speciation by offering *recognition* to the postcolonial other. In such cases, the object of recognition is not the actual existence of the "contingent and indefinite" social relation but rather the institutional codification of speciation

through disciplinary means. Recognition most often presents itself in the guise of an ethical choice: If the postimperial expert were to refuse such symmetrical recognition, she would immediately have to face the problems of complicity with the asymmetries often summoned under the name of "cultural imperialism" against which postcolonial students invested in their respective institutions of speciation are highly sensitized.

The discourse of recognition thus proffers 'intercultural dialogue' in which postimperial and postcolonial students within symmetrical institutions of speciation share a form of comparative curiosity towards their respective 'local knowledge systems'. Yet the problem with much of the 'local knowledge systems' recognized by institutions organized around the principle of speciation is that they bear the legacy not just of the hegemonic, orientalist forms of high imperialism, but also the hegemonic nationalist forms of the postcolonial state. In this context, the exercise of mutual respect between students in the same classroom coming from different sides of the colonial/imperial divide could easily be complicit with the social forms of organization favorable to the mode of human speciation. The usefulness of this kind of pedagogy for the nation-state can be witnessed in moments like that recently described by Henry Kissinger's assertion that "hospitality" and "cultural empathy"—"born of a mutual effort to understand an alien and incomprehensible culture" (*Financial Times*, May 25, 2011)—were crucial to the rapprochement between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China in 1972. This is a pedagogy that is suited to and limited by the mode of speciation, and the fact that Kissinger was himself a migrant demonstrates the extent to which the temporality of the migrant can always be diverted to feed the space of speciation.

Translation

In the face of enormous asymmetries, the responsibility often falls, in the study of culture, to the linguistic realm to provide a bridgehead in the campaign for balance and symmetry. The name of this balancing bridge is, typically, "translation". The notion of symmetry through translation is largely due to its modern associations with equivalency and exchange. Here again, however, we find yet other, more nuanced forms of institutionalized asymmetry hiding behind the façade of symmetry. These forms cannot be limited to the gross imbalance of translational flows (Cronin 2003) but must also include the creation of mutually co-dependent forms of identity on both sides of the divide according to what Naoki Sakai has termed "the schema of co-figuration" (Sakai 1997, 59). In the translational exchange between two officially-recognized state languages on either side of the colonial/imperial divide, many will

forget the asymmetries that went into producing the assumed unity of each language: the historical and/or contemporary repression of ‘dialects’ and ‘minority’ languages and the roles played by hybrid, ‘exceptional’ forms of address such as translation and infant aphasia. The intervention of the state into the linguistic realm of everyday life and the reorganization of linguistic being according to the principles of normalized state language serving a homogeneous sphere of exchange have had enormous effect upon the speciation of the human. Within what I have previously characterized as the post-catastrophic terrain of the global system of nation-states (Solomon 2008), linguistic asymmetries flourish behind the façade of imposed homogenization.

One especially salient form of contemporary linguistic asymmetry can be seen in the distribution of tongues and bodies within Western universities. In spite of the current restructuring of national institutions of culture and technology into globalized centers of ‘innovation’, virtually the only part of Caldwell’s European “natives” with professional access to authoritative knowledge in so-called ‘local’ languages on the other side of the colonial/imperial divide are those specialists working in domains of research and teaching that in North America are called “area studies” —and we are here talking about a form of access that is more or less passive and does not involve active production, much less subjection to the disciplinary and market constraints under which intellectuals in the postcolonial state operate. Above and beyond their role in the production of knowledge, the “area studies” in postimperial institutions are, more importantly, a technology for managing the distribution of bodies, tongues, and minds in such a way that the asymmetries of the colonial/imperial divide appear to correspond to a more or less normalized distribution of knowledge and experience that can be safely called cultural difference. Naoki Sakai charts this out very clearly and with considerable attention to the nuances of indeterminacy that many other commentators miss or cover up in an essay that I would consider to be required reading for all those involved in the trans/national study of culture titled, "The Problem of Japanese Thought".

In this essay essentially devoted to mapping the imaginary symmetries generated by the institutions of speciation, Sakai describes how the modern regime of translation not just enables the representational schema essential to the imaginary of national language, but is also vital to the institutionalization of both a disciplinary division in the heart of the human sciences and a practical division in the social relations that obtain across the colonial/imperial divide. What results from this series of mutually-related institutional instances are complicitous forms of identity—typically related to

the homogeneous form of sociality favored by the nation-state—on both sides of the colonial/imperial divide.

In the introduction to *Translation and Subjectivity*, the collection in which "The Problem of Japanese Thought" was finalized (after having been published previously in English in the *Tamkang Review* and in Japanese in *Shisô*) and republished, Sakai deftly shows how an analytic of the position of the translator offers a path for understanding the cultural encounter in a different way. Classic modern theories of translation see the translator as a member of one community who helps mediate communicational exchange with members of another community. Sakai shows how this understanding of the position of the translator is indebted to a representational schema, the "schema of cofiguration", that can only be established *ex posto facto* and thus betrays the actual practice of translational encounter.

> Through the labor of the translator, the incommensurability as difference that calls for the service of the translator in the first place is negotiated and worked on. In other words, the work of translation is a practice by which the initial discontinuity between the addresser and the addressee is made continuous and recognizable. In this respect, translation is just like other social practices that render the points of discontinuity in social formation continuous. Only retrospectively and after translation, therefore, can we recognize the initial incommensurability as a gap, crevice, or border between fully constituted entities, spheres, or domains. But, when represented as a gap, crevice or border, it is no longer incommensurate. As I discuss in chapter 4, incommensurability or difference is more like "feeling" that is prior to the explanation of how incommensurability is given rise to and cannot be determined as a represented difference (or species difference in the arborescent schemata of the species and the genus) between two subjects or entities. What makes it possible to represent the initial difference as an already determined difference between one language unity and another is the work of translation itself. (Sakai 1997, 14)

In Sakai's account, the translator occupies a crucial pivot. According to different regimes, which Sakai names homolingual and heterolingual, the translator can be assumed to occupy either an exceptional position or a hybrid and indeterminate one. The homolingual regime is not homolingual on account of the absence of other languages; on the contrary, it relies on plurality that has been organized in symmetrical fashion. It is considered homolingual rather on the basis of the founding

exceptions that enable its fictive representation of the symmetrical relation between linguistic unities. Seen from the homolingual regime, the translator is the figure who mediates not just between addresser and adressee but also between two different linguistic communities. Yet he is excepted from the instances of pronominal invocation seen in the translational exchange, the constitution of the personal relations between addresser and addressee, and the linguistic hybridity seen in his own position. The operation of exception is accompanied by a representational schema based on anaphora: the confusion between the translator and the addresser, on the one hand, and the confusion between the languages of translation and the formation of a collective 'we' on the other. When seen from the point of view of heterolingual address, however, the translator reveals an essential indeterminacy without exception in the constitution of subjectivity, both at an individual and at a collective level.

Significantly, the critique of exceptionality at the heart of the homolingual address parallels the critique of exceptionality in the logic of sovereignty discussed by Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 1998). It is precisely at this point that the disparate institutions of speciation converge. The principle of sovereignty that organizes population according to geocultural space and the notion of cultural unity that organizes the disciplines of the human sciences share a similar logic of exceptionalism that sustains the appropriation of cultural forms by specific difference. If the human species is, as Foucault says, distinguished from other species by practices of language, labor and life that actively participate in the speciation of the human, it is clear that the current historically-determined conditions under which we live rely upon a discipline of language as the crucial point of articulation. Although I have reservations about the economy of explanation that enables my critique of the institutions of speciation to articulate widely disparate institutional forms, I am convinced that the parallel seen between the logic of sovereignty and the homolingual regime of translation provides a persuasive basis for such an approach.

What Sakai is telling us is that the apparent symmetry ostensibly seen in the schema of cofiguration is essentially an optical illusion of representation masking the deeper asymmetries that masquerade under the normalized oppositions of cultural difference. Hence, Sakai reserves the term "cultural difference" to describe the encounter of alterity and indeterminacy in the social situation in general; what is normally called cultural difference today ought instead to be termed, asserts Sakai, "specific (or species) difference". The asymmetries lurking behind the symmetry of normalized "specific difference" are seen most clearly in the exclusions and

exceptions that delineate each of the respective positions and authorize their formal equivalence. The “extremely ambiguous and unstable position the translator has to occupy” (Sakai 1997, 11) presents symmetry of a different order: it is open in the same fashion from any point of entry and does not admit any exceptions.

Transformations

Because the hybridity of the translator is inherent to the formation of subjectivity, one can no more pretend that it is a utopian possibility than imagine that it is a fictional chimera destined simply to disappear. The real task for the trans/national study of culture is to transform the terms in which trans/national social practices such as translation are represented. The first step in such transformation lies for Sakai in what may termed an ethical gesture. In place of inevitably comparative frameworks that boil down to “what model of human being is proposed in a given culture?”—i.e., in place of frameworks that actively participate in the speciation of the human, the new trans/national study of culture proposes to ask questions about the historical, ontological and political mechanisms that produce this kind of speciation in the first place. In relation to the formation of Japanese thought, Sakai writes:

> we must develop the problem of Japanese thought from perspectives that are not entirely in accord with the desire conjured up by the question "What is Japanese thought?"; instead of submitting ourselves to that desire to want to know "what Japanese thought is," we must rather analyze the apparatus whereby the desire itself is reproduced, by always shifting our focus away from it. (Sakai 1997, 42)

The questions that we need to ask, in other words, are questions resolutely focused on the production of subjectivity, rather than the supposed anteriority of cultural objects. To bring this insight into the context of a trans/national study of culture, we need to undertake a complete overhaul and redefinition of the terms of 'comparison' such that it is no longer focused on the relation between supposedly independent and autonomous objects that represent unities and pluralities in the speciation of the human. Instead, the focus needs to be moved to the relations that comprise the constitution of singular subjects—indifferent to speciation, but not to each other and the play of difference between and within each.

Yet the question remains, at a pedagogical level, of how the desire of the student of cultural study can be transformed? Can the teacher foster this transformation? Are the institutions of higher education designed to aid or prevent it? Sakai does not really answer *this* question, except to say that "desire" must be replaced by "analysis" of the "apparatus by which desire itself is reproduced". Yet how is this turning away from desire, which is really the construction of a new desire, to be accomplished? Students arrive in programs of higher education with a certain self-selection prior to entry at the level of desire that is so complex it can rarely be consciously understood. Add to that the disciplinary requirement to focus on objective mastery, not subjective growth, that defines the modern university, and we have a situation that virtually excludes bringing the formation of desire into focus in a legitimate way. Most of the transformations in this regard happen in 'extra-curricular' activities, the flip side of the nepotism and sexual harassment that continue to play important, if highly negative, roles in teacher-student relationships. The only clue to a more positive institutional direction that can be drawn from Sakai would be that the desire-to-know, as a specific form of desire, straddles the complex distinction between experience and knowledge, constituting a kind of "quasi-object" (Latour 1993).

It is no surprise that Foucault's efforts to create the innovative "archaeological method" in the human sciences by abandoning the concepts of origin and influence (and hence continuity) dominant in the historical study of culture had to be linked to a critique not just of experience (Foucault was focused particularly on rejecting the phenomenological understanding of the term), but also of the relation between experience and knowledge in the production of the individual. Foucault's work from the archaeological period was devoted to showing how the dialectical relation between experience and knowledge is consummated by the figure of Man—precisely the point where this dialectic achieves its greatest synthetic height and its fatal instability (Solomon 2010). This dialectic radicalizes the entire calculus of asymmetry and symmetry that we have been charting. Anyone who has worked or studied in the human sciences in the modern institutions of higher education is familiar, regardless of national or cultural context, with the difficulties of the perceived split between experience and knowledge. Foucault is probably the one thinker who has gone the furthest in charting out the genesis of this split, which he attributes to the emergence of a new anthropological figure conscious of itself as a talking, laboring and reproductive *species*. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault unearths and makes visible the epistemological and ontological assumptions behind the speciation of the human. At the crux of these assumptions lies a split between the

transcendental and the empirical, each of which is internally cut, divided, and finally mapped onto the difference between experience and knowledge. The human sciences in their modern declension impose upon us a quest to find ever more effective methodologies that would explain and reduce the gap between the two—this is what is called "rationality". "Man" is, for Foucault, precisely the 'effect' or 'result' of the ratio or oscillation between the empirical and the transcendental set in motion by this species that effects its own 'internal' speciation through the rationalities of talking, working, and reproducing. Precisely because the methodologies of the human sciences in all their various forms are themselves part of the subjective technologies that produce the anthropological figure of Man in the first place, they can, according to Foucault, never actually resolve the fundamental problem, only exacerbate it.

This problem or fissure at the heart of the human sciences produces considerable difficulty for our project of expanding relationships beyond speciation in the temporality of colonial/imperial encounter. What is particularly interesting is the way in which "areas studies" implement the project of the human sciences as described by Foucault in an especially acute fashion. While the human sciences in general establish the figure of Man as a species that creates its own speciation through language, labor and life, the areas studies, by devoting themselves to the epistemological representation of so-called 'actual experience' of human communities distinguished according to the discipline of specific difference, are the place where the human sciences reach their apogee. They are, in other words, the place where the oscillation between knowledge and experience overtly resolves into the institutions of speciation.

What I would like here to draw attention to are the disciplinary-institutional aspects of the speciation of the human—bodies and tongues, rather than minds. Compared to the overtly programmatic nature of previous forms of knowledge in the mode of speciation such as eugenics, climate studies, social pathology, national character studies, etc. that enjoyed enormous mainstream legitimacy prior to World War Two but were ostensibly discredited by the revelation of Nazi horror, the disciplinary-institutional forms of speciation have enjoyed much greater durability and acceptance. It is largely in response to the inadequacy of such cultural geography that contemporary geographers such as Nigel Thrift have espoused the notion of "non-representational geography" (Thrift 2008). The critique of representational and spatialized forms of culture difference, even with regard to ostensible 'mobile' subjects of transnational flows, such as migrants, still has not yet displaced the

assemblages of bodies and tongues favored by the mode of speciation. The challenge posed by the compounded asymmetries of the area studies-plus-the human sciences points us to the following problem: How can those with different sorts of experiential claims collectively recognized by the schema of cofiguration sustain the brutal oscillations between experience and knowledge set in motion by the modern human sciences and still aspire to liberation from the mode of speciation?

For Illich, the educational institutions of the capitalist nation-state seem to offer no possibility for positive transformation. Hence, he favors exodus. The fundamental reason for this impossibility ultimately lie in the way in which experience has been banished from the university: "The modern university has forfeited its chance to provide a simple setting for encounters which are both autonomous and anarchic, focused yet unplanned and ebullient, and has chosen instead to manage the process by which so-called research and instruction are produced." (Illich 1971, 18). Writing in the 1970s, Ilich could have barely imagined the forms of audit bureaucracy introduced into anglophone universities starting in the 1980s that have rapidly established the rules of the globalized market in higher education under the WTO since that time (Ross 2009). Within this emerging global system, the aleatory possibilities for "unmeasured experience" (Illich 1971, 20) seem today even more remote than they did in Illich's time.

In their writings on the transformation of society since the advent of the postfordist economy of "cognitive capitalism", the Italian and French writers of the "autonomist" school have highlighted the way in which Illich's "unmeasured experience" has become an essential component of the "immaterial labor" that characterizes the current era. By a blurring of the distinctions between labor time and leisure time, consumption and production, contemporary capitalism has successfully incorporated many forms of experience that were formerly outside the realm of production. Indeed, experience is now a central component of the creative industries and the knowledge economy. Illich's appeal to "unmeasured experience" thus becomes yet another instance of the way his positions, such as the call for a withdrawal of the State from education, have, like so many other 'conclusions' coming out of the radicalism of the 1960s, been essentially co-opted by contemporary neo-liberalism (Holmes 2002). In view of Foucault's work on the human sciences, we can safely conclude that any attempt to pit experience against knowledge is destined to expose itself to such recuperation.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that we can abandon the category of experience, or knowledge, altogether. Sakai's call for an ethics of turning away from desire to an analytic of the mechanisms by which desire is produced suggest the continuing importance of bringing experience and knowledge together, albeit in new ways. Needless to say, a transformation of this magnitude will have to be accompanied by a radically different ontology from that upon which the human sciences have been constructed. It is in this sense that I understand Frédéric Neyrat's critique of "the ontological indemnity of capitalism" to take its most poignant form (Neyrat 2005). It is not by chance that capitalism, as a form of ontological indemnity, has located the form of social organization most appropriate to the management of labor in the institutions of human speciation. It would however be inappropriate in an essay devoted to institutions to seek a resolution by displacing the problem to ontology. Especially given the current situation in which the only visible plan for institutional reform is seen in restructuring along a corporate model, the importance of alternative proposals for deep institutional reform, rather than rearguard defensive actions of historically-determined and compromised forms, cannot be overemphasized.

One can discern two movements or tendencies in the current conjuncture that appear to be diametrically opposed, but which may, in fact, be the harbingers of transformational paths to come. The first is an institutional moment in which the burgeoning insecurities caused by the drastic reduction in funding for the humanities, including the outright elimination of many programs, are forcing people to pose questions about the constitution of the human sciences themselves. This may be a chance for those who are not yet addicted to the hollow pleasures of scapegoating and nostalgia to ask if the unprecedented debacle of the humanities is not in some way related to their own historicity? The second is an anti-institutional moment in which more and more people, forced by the precariousness of employment opportunities in the university, will look to build alternatives outside. Inevitably, part of the division between these two tendencies will work itself out through the different logics of institutions versus networks.

Within an institutional context, linguistic training could continue to play an irreplaceable role, now mobilized in support of the transition to a rebirth of the humanities. To give but one example pertinent to institutions of speciation in the postimperial context, the incorporation of the learning of non-Western languages into programs of study that apparently have no connection to non-Western subjects could, by attacking one of the gross asymmetries in the institutional assemblage of

bodies, tongues, and minds, provide institutional conditions for ending the dominant mode of speciation. To become accredited in Western philosophy for example, it would be necessary to demonstrate professional linguistic competence (including active production skills) with regard to the body of related writing in at least one non-Western language. To be effective, the same logic would have to be applied in the reverse direction. Similarly, specialization in the 'actual experience' of a particular geocultural area would have to be accompanied by the conceptual defamiliarization that only 'theory' can provide. Of course, such measures in and of themselves are not sufficient to change the institutional format, but then again, neither is the simple production of alternative knowledge, to which essays such as this one aspire. The point is to begin to attack deep-rooted asymmetries in the global assemblage that links tongues to bodies and minds as a first step to producing entirely new assemblages.

The goal of such reforms would be, in a word, to create something like what Illich has termed "'convivial' institutions" (Illich 1971, 27). Illich's definition of conviviality in *Deschooling Society* in terms of aleatory, "spontaneous" encounter lacks precision and could be misleading, unless we take care to define it in terms, as I have suggested elsewhere, of the "non-relation" between experience and knowledge that exists prior to the establishment of their symmetrical opposition (Solomon 2010). In *Tools for Conviviality* (Illich 1973), Illich considerably refines the definition of the concept, dialing it in on interdependent autonomy, rather than experience. Its affective disposition is described by austerity and playfulness. Its cognitive dimension is found in the distinction between machines and tools. This distinction is not a question of 'technological level', but of social relations. Machines favor centralization and domination; tools favor autonomy and equality. Significantly, Illich considers language, particularly "mother tongue", to be the model of an essentially convivial tool, yet like the majority of socially-engaged thinkers in the 20th century, the framework in which he understands language and culture is formatted by the normativity of the nation-state. This leads Illich to view the "pernicious spread of one nation beyond its boundaries" (Illich 1973, 19) as a threat to conviviality, rather than the institution of the national frontier itself. In order to be a useful idea for guiding a transition out of the modes of speciation, it would be necessary to reconfigure Illich's idea of conviviality on the basis of an alternate ontology: conviviality cannot be reduced to the relation between two or more unities thought on the basis of individualism, but rather results from or accompanies instead assemblages of bodies, tongues, and minds that are not aligned with specific difference.

The historically-determined mode of speciation is everywhere now caught in the paroxysms of simultaneous dissolution and reinforcement. What are the chances for realizing fundamental institutional change? Perhaps only war and violence can answer that question. And, for that very reason, it is my humble opinion that we will quite likely see an acceleration in the forms of exodus outside the institutions of speciation.

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